

Preparing Cherry Blocks for Printing

Solid wood planks, even ones this thick, can warp. For this reason, it is a good idea to let the blocks rest at least two weeks before cutting so they have a chance to adjust to the humidity in your area.

The ends of the larger Cherry Blocks have been waxed to help prevent warping. To remove any wax found on the flat side of the block, carefully scrape away as much wax as possible using a thin spatula or table knife before sanding. Sanding the waxed area without scraping it first is likely to heat the wax, allowing it to penetrate deeper into the wood and making it impossible to remove.

One side of the block has been sanded to a fairly smooth 150 grit surface. You can continue sanding this side to a mirror-like surface using successive sandpaper grits up to 400 and 600 grit. This extra effort will result in more solid printed areas, especially if you are using water based inks. Be sure to always sand *with* the grain, not across it. Use a rubber sanding block, and take care to keep the sanding block absolutely flat on the surface of the Cherry Block as you sand. (Or you can spray adhesive to a very flat surface such as

plate glass or granite tile, apply the sandpaper gritty-side up and sand the face of the block on this surface.) After sanding with 400 grit sandpaper, moisten the surface of the block with water. Allow to dry at least 30 minutes or overnight. Sand again with 600 grit sandpaper.

Be careful to sand the entire surface of the block equally. This is especially necessary if you will be printing with a press, since areas that are over-sanded or dished will show up as light areas on the print.

The rough side of the block can be sanded and used for another print. It is also possible to plane the carved block down to a new surface after the edition has been pulled and use it again.

Unlike wood which has distinctive growth rings that are very different in density, such as fir or pine, there is virtually no difference in the hardness of the growth rings of cherry. Because of this, cherry is used to make prints that do not show any grain pattern.

Store flat in a dry place, preferably at room temperature to prevent warping.



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